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Connecting

March 15, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this March 15, 2024,

Journalism is in trouble – and maybe there’s something you can do about it.

In the last two decades, the United States has lost nearly 2,900 newspapers and 43,000 journalists.

Doing its part to help the cause of our profession is a group of Wall Street Journal alums who are helping small legacy and start-up news organizations around the country whose news teams have been depleted by shrinking revenue and cutbacks.

Our colleague [Jeff Rowe](#) – a former AP broadcast writer and former WSJ staff writer – tells about the group called Pro News Coaches that is currently working with eight small news organizations scattered around the nation – one of them located in my city of birth.

Interested in joining an AP alum coaching group? Jeff would welcome hearing from you. His email - jfrowe@rocketmail.com

Connecting's "poet laureate" [Norm Abelson](#) celebrates his 93rd birthday tomorrow, and he has a little verse he'd like to share with his colleagues:

*When I was nine pal Charlie and I climbed the chestnut tree;
a memory still shining bright as sun as I touch ninety-three.
And playing ball at Ferryway Green lives still in memory
as I now count out my time to ninety-three.*

*I can recall now all those times ago, don't you see;
but back then I could never have imagined myself at ninety-three.
Yet, am I in these times so different from that younger me?
I still have dreams and hopes and promises at ninety-three.*

*Perhaps we've always been growing toward what we were meant to be,
So I'm still looking ahead with a smile, especially at ninety-three.*

Check out the new AP.org – From AP Connections: This week AP launched a new, modern version of [AP.org](#), our corporate website. It will spotlight AP's journalism and enable us to showcase our many business and service areas. The new site will also allow the marketing team to elevate the brand through more sophisticated campaigns to help drive revenue.

'The Last Repair Shop' – From [Dodi Fromson](#) - Thanks to Peggy Walsh for sending us "The Last Repair Shop." I have been so keen to see it, and today was just the right day. It's two years today since my daughter breathed her last, in Israel, and this was the upper I needed. We all do. Click [here](#) to view.

Have a great weekend – and Happy St. Patrick's Day on Sunday. Be safe, stay healthy, live each day to your fullest.

Paul

Wall Street Journal alums coaching small news organizations

[Jeff Rowe](#) - Some Wall Street Journal alums have formed a team to help small legacy and start-up news organizations around the country whose news teams have been depleted by shrinking revenue and cutbacks.

The need is great.

Since 2005, the U.S. has lost nearly 2,900 newspapers and 43,000 journalists, according to figures compiled by the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

Dubbed Pro News Coaches (PNC), the WSJ alums currently are at work in eight small news organizations scattered around the nation. The Journal alums typically help young reporters and their editors plan stories, conceive and manage projects, and edit. Journal alums are coaching in, among other places, Olney, Texas, Excelsior Springs, Missouri and Signal Hill, California.

In Olney, Texas, WSJ alums Jonathan Friedland and Bruce Koon have been helping Olney Enterprise editor Gina Keating plan coverage, edit, coach local citizens on column writing and teach high school students how to cover sports.

Since the coaches' arrival, Keating says she has received "numerous compliments" about the improved quality of the Enterprise's coverage.



ABOVE: From left - Paul Stevens, Courtney Cole, Jason Cole and Mackenzie Cole at the historic Elms Hotel in Excelsior Springs, Mo.

RIGHT: Courtroom illustration by Mackenzie Cole.

In Excelsior Springs, Missouri, PNC's Rich Jaroslovsky is helping Excelsior Citizen publisher Jason Cole and his wife, founder Courtney Cole, sort out questions such as how to report what they heard from an adjacent room from where the school board was meeting in a closed session. A lawyer seemed to be coaching members



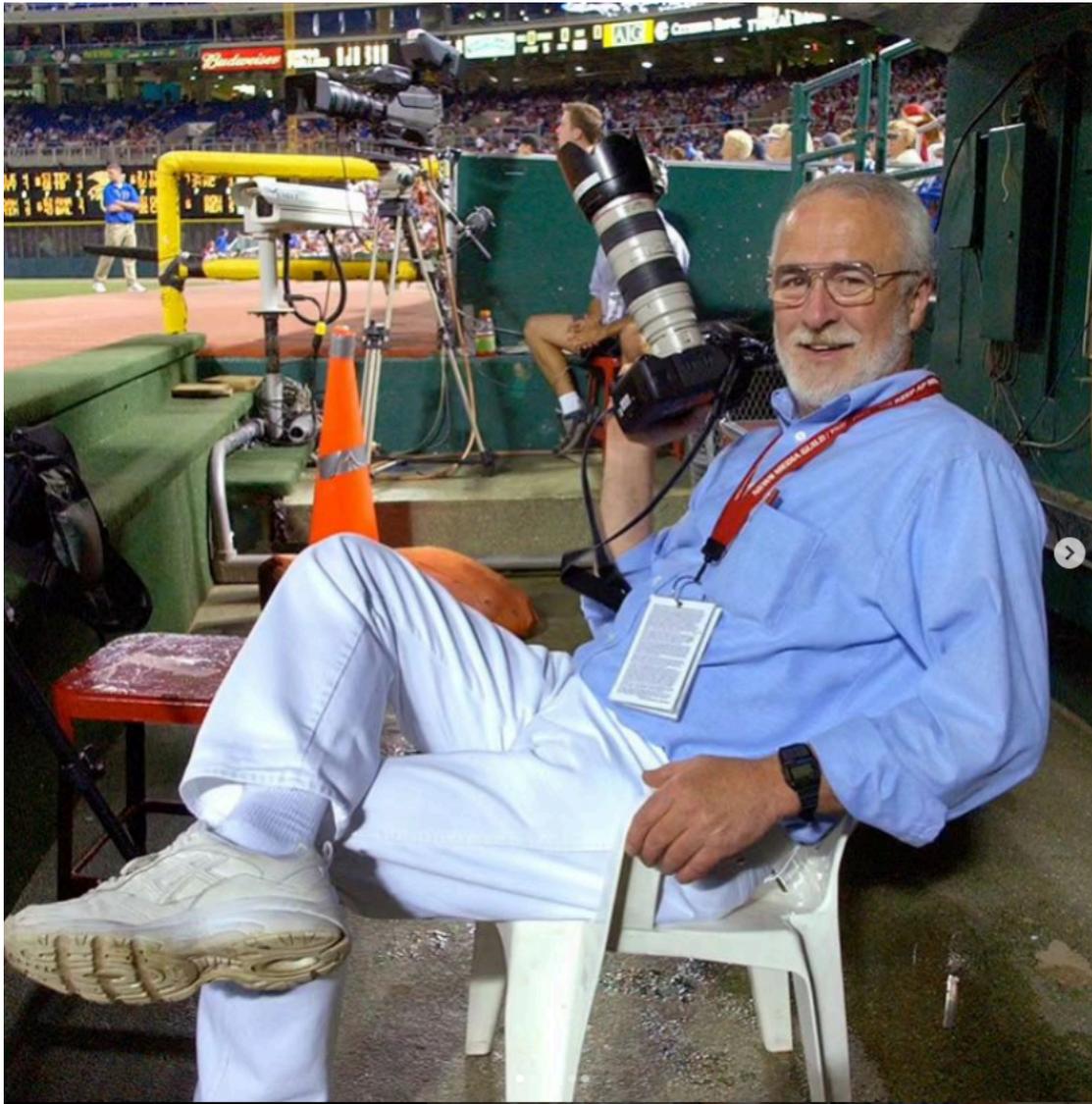
to “forget” certain things in a pending case. Jaroslovsky's advice: The Citizen could ethically use what the Coles heard but should stick to a straightforward account. Jaroslovsky learned his way around such reporting challenges in his years covering the White House and serving as the Journal's national political editor.

The Citizen's competition is the legacy Excelsior Springs Standard, where Connecting editor Paul Stevens' dad edited the paper in the years after World War II. Last month, Stevens trekked to Excelsior Springs to visit with the Coles, who said they had a "great time" visiting with Paul. Also in the picture is the Cole's daughter Mackenzie, who digresses sometimes from her high-school studies to draw professional-grade courtroom sketches for the Citizen.

PNC offers its initial coaching services free but intends to segue into collecting modest fees.

PNC is based in New York but has no connection with The Wall Street Journal or its parent News Corp. Most of the coaching is done via Zoom, phone calls or email but the editor-reporter and reporter at the Signal (Hill) Tribune meet with me about once a month in person at the restaurant owned by the Tribune publisher who pays for the lunch.

Remembering George Widman



[Jim Gerberich](#) - I was saddened to learn of George's passing. I met him while working for a member, the Lancaster New Era, which was about 60 miles northwest of Philadelphia. He was always helpful and always with a story. I joined AP on the other side of the U.S. and over the years we lost track of each other so I went back to remember some of the work he did and stories he covered. [Here's a link to a snapshot of his work.](#)

And the photo above is a fitting frame shared by Jerry Lodriguss, formerly of the Philly Inquirer. One of George's and Jerry's colleagues, Eric Mencher wrote this and it rings so true: "Damn, so very sorry to read this. What a great guy—always with a big smile to brighten up the dugout, the sidelines, the courtside. And who else could wear white jeans and pull it off so well?"

Becky Day among those honored by Kentucky Broadcasters

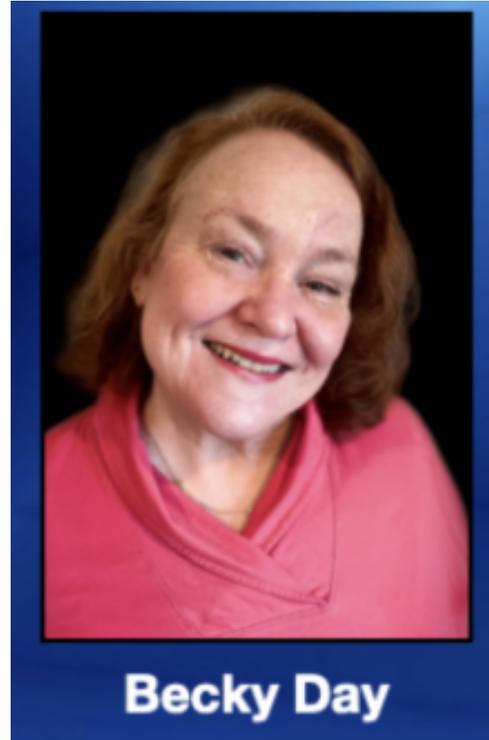
[Adam Yeomans](#) – The Kentucky Broadcasters Association had a well-deserved shout out for [Becky Day](#) (better half of our colleague Dan Day) in its weekly newsletter. She

has been doing a masterful job coordinating two KBA contests for several years, including one KBA took over from AP when we discontinued our state contests in 2019.

Thought it was worth noting because as anyone who has worked as a bureau chief or AA knows, contests are important to the folks entering and take a lot of work to do well. Becky is one of the best.

From Chris Winkle, KBA President & CEO:

On International Women's Day, I reflected on the incredible Kentucky broadcast women who have influenced my career over the years. Watching Nancy Cox, Sue Wylie, Barbara Bailey and Melissa Swan. Being inspired by Julie Talbot, Renee Shaw, Connie Joiner and Deborah Claypool. Hearing stories about Ann Thomas McMakin, Lucille Smith, Mae Hoover and Virginia Fox. I have had the pleasure to work alongside Betty Gayle, Barb Smith, Vickie Newberry and Sue Brady. I have learned a lot from station owners like Dana Withers, Kristin Cantrell and Beth Mann. My first board chair in this role as KBA President was chairwoman Marti Hazel, who believed in me and gave me a chance. And I wouldn't be where I am today without Ann Anderson giving me my first broadcast job in 1991, simply because I could type 80 words per minute.



I am also blessed to be surrounded by many amazing women (pictured above and more below) who currently serve KBA in various capacities. From current board members, Ambassadors, associates and committee members to our dedicated staff, who push me to be better every single day.

On behalf of the Kentucky Broadcasters Association, we celebrate and honor all women in the broadcast industry, both past and present, for their determination to inspire a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination.

About Becky:

Becky Day - KBA Awards Facilitator - Becky resides in New Jersey and is an awards contest ninja. She joined KBA as a contract employee several years ago to facilitate the Impact & Excellence awards. Becky ensures that the contests are conducted in a non-bias, confidential and professional manner. She also facilitates several other contests around the country.

College athletes-union

Bruce Lowitt - I just read the AP Sports Wire Story "Majority of U.S. adults are against college athletes joining unions." According to The AP-NORC survey, about 6 in 10 adults under the age of 45 support athletes joining unions, the numbers drop to 36 percent between ages 45-59 and 23 percent ages 60 and older. It also has breakdowns by race and party affiliation.

In tiny type below the lengthy story, it says 1,102 adults were polled. That's the population of Continental Village, Ohio (2020 census). That's the population of Knox, Pa. (same census). That's also the average attendance at Patriots Conference 2023 basketball games. To me, polling 1,102 people and extrapolating the numbers to the national populace is ridiculous (it claims a margin of error of 4.1 percent).

I suppose there are techies and other nerds who will vouch for the legitimacy of the survey, but to this 21-years-over-60 adult I suspect it's a very sound reason why many people no longer have faith in polls.

Interesting factoid

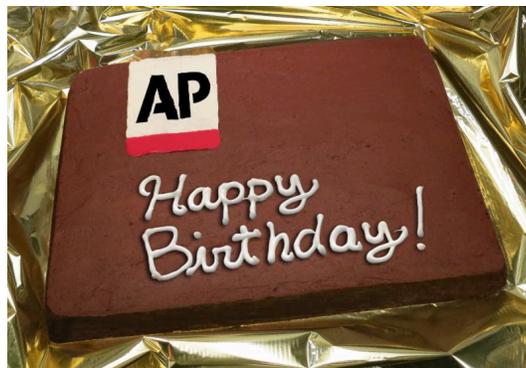
Rick Cooper - Two items appearing in the AP's March 14 Today in History feature also appeared as 14 letter entries in the daily New York Times Crossword puzzle.

At 13 down, "Scientist who was notably born on this day". AP's first entry, Albert Einstein

At 3 down "Scientist who notably passed away on this day(2018). AP's thirteenth entry, Stephen Hawking.

So I guess it pays to read CONNECTING all the way through everyday.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Jack Limpert](#)

[Janis Magin](#)

[Seth Sutel](#)

On Saturday to...

[Norm Abelson](#)

[Steve Hindy](#)

[Julie Pace](#)

[Colleen Newvine Tebeau](#)

On Sunday to...

[Dennis Anderson](#)

[Geoff Haynes](#)

[Leanne Italie](#)

[Carl Leubsdorf](#)

[Arlene Levinson](#)

[Jeff Robbins](#)

Stories of interest

Meta to Replace Widely Used Data Tool—and Largely Cut Off Reporter Access (Wall; Street Journal)

By Jeff Horwitz

Meta META -0.75%decrease; red down pointing triangle Platforms plans to shut down a data tool long used by academic researchers, journalists and others to monitor the spread of content on its Facebook and Instagram services, the company said on Thursday.

The social-media giant said it will decommission CrowdTangle in five months and is replacing it with a tool called the Meta Content Library, which will be available only to academic and nonprofit researchers, not to most news outlets.

CrowdTangle has been widely used by journalists, researchers and regulators seeking to understand social-media platforms and studying the viral spread of content including false information and conspiracy theories. Reporting based on data that the tool produced often caused frustration for Meta's leaders, who have been gradually limiting the tool in recent years.

Meta has already started taking applications for access to the new tool, which it said it is continuing to develop. The company said it will be an upgrade over CrowdTangle, with features the old tool lacked, such as the ability to search content based on how widely it was viewed and to see data on public comments on posts.

Two researchers granted early access to the new system offered a mixed appraisal.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mark Mittelstadt.

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2024 Shadid Award Winners & Finalists (Center for Journalism Ethics)

A team of three NBC News reporters has won the 2024 Anthony Shadid Award for Journalism Ethics for their work exposing America's failed death notification system.

Jon Schuppe, Mike Hixenbaugh and Rich Schapiro showed how authorities in Hinds County, Mississippi, were unceremoniously burying the bodies of missing people without notifying the loved ones still searching for them. During their investigation, the NBC News team repeatedly came into possession of more information about the deceased than local authorities had shared with their families, requiring them to carefully navigate a range of ethical issues.

The Center for Journalism Ethics will present the award on May 6 in a ceremony at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

The event will also feature a moderated conversation on journalism ethics with Anchor of "Inside Politics Sunday" and Chief Congressional Correspondent at CNN Manu Raju and Katie Harbath, chief global affairs officer at Duco Experts.

Registration for the ceremony is now open.

Named for UW–Madison alum and Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Anthony Shadid, the award honors the difficult ethical decisions journalists make when telling high-impact stories. Shadid, who died in 2012 while on assignment covering Syria, was a member of the Center for Journalism Ethics advisory board and worked to encourage integrity in reporting.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Linda Deutsch.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Anthony Shadid began his Middle East reporting career as a reporter for the AP based in Cairo, traveling around the region from 1995-1999, and served as news editor in the AP's Los Angeles bureau.

And...

2024 Finalists

Kristen Gelineau, Associated Press. Investigative correspondent Kristen Gelineau's coverage of the Rohingya people led her to this story about the trafficking of Rohingya girls to Malaysia where they are subjected to rape, imprisonment and other abuse. According to the nomination, Gelineau navigated a minefield of ethical dilemmas, including working to protect sources dealing with extreme levels of trauma and desperation and ensuring that her work did not re-traumatize vulnerable people.

Recent winners of the award include the Associated Press team of Mystyslav Cherbov, Evgeniy Maloletka, Vasilisa Stepanenko and Lori Hinnant for their courageous report on Russia's attack on Mariupol, Jessica Contrera of the Washington Post for her reporting on child sex trafficking, and Margie Mason and Robin McDowell of the Associated Press for exposing widespread labor abuses in the global palm oil industry.

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AI image-generator Midjourney blocks images of Biden and Trump as election looms (AP)

BY MATT O'BRIEN

The popular artificial intelligence image-generator Midjourney has started blocking its users from creating fake images of President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump ahead of the upcoming U.S. presidential election, according to tests of the AI tool by The Associated Press.

With the election in full swing, it's time to "put some foots down on election-related stuff for a bit," Midjourney CEO David Holz told several hundred members of the service's devoted userbase in a digital office hours event Wednesday.

Declaring that "this moderation stuff is kind of hard," Holz didn't outline exactly what policy changes were being made but described the clampdown as a temporary measure to make it harder for people to abuse the tool. The company didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday.

Attempts by AP journalists to test Midjourney's new policy on Wednesday by asking it to make an image of "Trump and Biden shaking hands at the beach" led to a "Banned Prompt Detected" warning. A second attempt escalated the warning to: "You have triggered an abuse alert."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

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Anti-Israel protesters swarm The Post, NY Times printing plant before 124 are arrested while shutting down Gray Lady's Midtown HQ (New York Post)

By Snejana Farberov and Larry Celona

Anti-Israel protesters tried to stop the New York Times from rolling out of its Queens printing facility early Thursday — before 124 were later arrested while shutting down the Gray Lady's Midtown HQ, sources told The Post.

The mob first descended just before 1 a.m. on the 300,000-square-foot printing hub in College Point — which also prints The Post — littering the access road to prevent trucks from collecting newspapers for delivery.

The protesters — many masked and wearing traditional Palestinian keffiyeh scarves — laid down, linked together with tubes to create a human chain, blocking one of the largest printing facilities in the country, which also produces the Wall Street Journal, Newsday, and USA Today.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac.

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The New York Times is fighting off Wordle look-alikes with copyright takedown notices (AP)

BY WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AND GAETANE LEWIS

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Times is fighting off Wordle "clones" — arguing that numerous games inspired by the mega-popular word-guessing game infringe on its copyright protections.

Hundreds of copycats have emerged since Wordle skyrocketed to internet fame less than three years ago. And now the Times, which purchased the game in 2022, is sending takedown notices to people behind some of the look-alikes.

The Times has filed several Digital Millennium Copyright Act, or DMCA, takedown notices to developers of Wordle-inspired games, which cited infringement on the

Times' ownership of the Wordle name, as well as its look and feel — such as the layout and color scheme of green, gray and yellow tiles.

In a prepared statement, a New York Times Co. spokesperson said the company has no issue with people creating similar word games that do not infringe its Wordle “trademarks or copyrighted gameplay.” But the company took action against one user on software developer platform GitHub who created a “Wordle clone” project that included instructions on how to create “a knock-off version” of Wordle, and against others who shared his code.

Read more [here](#).

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Storied presses print L.A. Times for the last time as production moves to Riverside (Los Angeles Times)

BY THOMAS CURWEN

The swing shift is about to start at a plant that is about to close. Late winter sunlight casts long shadows from workers crossing the parking lot, where stray cats skulk among the cars.

Only two weeks left, and the routine is unchanged: clocking in at 5 p.m., heading to the locker room, trading street clothes for work wear. If anyone feels sadness or loss, no one shows it. They have a newspaper to put out.

“We’re trying to do this with a little class and dignity,” said shift supervisor Kal Hamalainen.

Sixteen months ago, they were told that the Los Angeles Times, their employer, would outsource the printing of the paper and that the Olympic printing plant, once a crown jewel in a vast media empire, would shut down sometime in 2024.

The decision was set in motion many years earlier when the Chicago-based Tribune Co., then owner of The Times, sold its historic properties, and The Times became a tenant.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Cliff Schiappa.

The Final Word



Shared by Doug Pizac

Today in History - March 15, 2024



Today is Friday, March 15, the 75th day of 2024. There are 291 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history:

On March 15, 44 B.C., Roman dictator Julius Caesar was assassinated by a group of nobles that included Brutus and Cassius.

On this date:

In 1493, Italian explorer Christopher Columbus arrived back in the Spanish harbor of Palos de la Frontera, two months after concluding his first voyage to the Western Hemisphere.

In 1820, Maine became the 23rd state.

In 1917, Czar Nicholas II abdicated in favor of his brother, Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich, who declined the crown, marking the end of imperial rule in Russia.

In 1919, members of the American Expeditionary Force from World War I convened in Paris for a three-day meeting to found the American Legion.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied bombers again raided German-held Monte Cassino.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson, addressing a joint session of Congress, called for new legislation to guarantee every American's right to vote; the result was passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In 1972, "The Godfather," Francis Ford Coppola's epic gangster movie based on the Mario Puzo novel and starring Marlon Brando and Al Pacino, premiered in New York.

In 1977, the situation comedy "Three's Company," starring John Ritter, Joyce DeWitt and Suzanne Somers, premiered on ABC-TV.

In 2005, former WorldCom chief Bernard Ebbers was convicted in New York of engineering the largest corporate fraud in U.S. history. (He was later sentenced to 25 years in prison.)

In 2011, the Syrian civil war had its beginnings with Arab Spring protests across the region that turned into an armed insurgency and eventually became a full-blown conflict.

In 2012, convicted former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich (blah-GOY'-uh-vich) walked into a federal prison in Colorado, where the 55-year-old Democrat began serving a 14-year sentence for corruption. (He was released in February 2020 after President Donald Trump commuted his sentence.)

In 2018, a pedestrian bridge that was under construction collapsed onto a busy Miami highway, crushing vehicles beneath massive slabs of concrete and steel; six people died and 10 were injured.

In 2019, a gunman killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, streaming the massacre live on Facebook. (Brenton Tarrant, an Australian white supremacist, was sentenced to life in prison without parole after pleading guilty to 51 counts of murder and other charges.)

In 2020, the Federal Reserve took massive emergency action to help the economy withstand the coronavirus by slashing its benchmark interest rate to near zero and saying it would buy \$700 billion in treasury and mortgage bonds. After initially trying to keep schools open, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said the nation's largest public school system would close in hopes of curbing the spread of the virus.

In 2021, actor Yaphet Kotto, whose films included "Midnight Run," the James Bond movie "Live and Let Die" and "Alien," died in the Philippines at 81.

In 2022, Russia stepped up its bombardment of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, while an estimated 20,000 civilians fled the desperately encircled port city of Mariupol by way of a humanitarian corridor.

In 2023, the American Kennel Club announced that the French bulldog had become the most popular breed in the U.S., overtaking the Labrador retriever, which had been on top for more than three decades.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Judd Hirsch is 89. Jazz musician Charles Lloyd is 86. Rock musician Phil Lesh is 84. Singer Mike Love (The Beach Boys) is 83. Rock singer-

musician Sly Stone is 81. Rock singer-musician Howard Scott (War; Lowrider Band) is 78. Rock singer Ry Cooder is 77. Actor Frances Conroy is 71. Actor Craig Wasson is 70. Rock singer Dee Snider (Twisted Sister) is 69. Actor Joaquim de Almeida is 67. Actor Park Overall is 67. Movie director Renny Harlin is 65. Model Fabio is 63. Singer Sananda Maitreya is 62. Rock singer Bret Michaels (Poison) is 61. R&B singer Rockwell is 60. Actor Chris Bruno is 58. Actor Kim Raver is 57. Rock singer Mark McGrath (Sugar Ray) is 56. Rock musician Mark Hoppus is 52. Country singer-musician Matt Thomas (Parmalee) is 50. Actor Eva Longoria is 49. Rapper-musician will.i.am (Black Eyed Peas) is 49. Rock DJ Joseph Hahn (Linkin Park) is 47. Rapper Young Buck is 43. Actor Sean Biggerstaff is 41. Actor Kellan Lutz is 39. Actor Caitlin Wachs is 35.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. Past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Central Region vice president based in Kansas City.



Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.
- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.
- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.
- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.
- **"A silly mistake that you make"** - a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.

- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

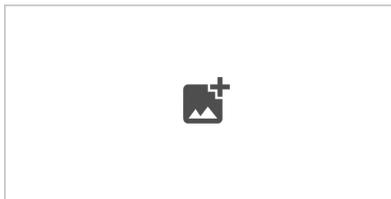
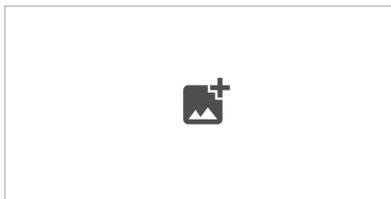
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

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